10

10 ORIENTATION--information especially likely to be needed by users of a file as a frame of reference for understanding the materials classified elsewhere; organization of the file, special coding decisions, and evaluation of the file

GUIDE TO THE AZ2 ANDAMANS FILE

[In the following discussion, the term "Andaman Islanders" will refer to all the indigenous Negrito peoples of the Andaman Islands, whereas the term "Andamanese" will refer specifically to the 10 tribes of the Great Andaman Group. This nomenclature has been adopted for reasons of clarity and simplicity. It may be noted that both Sarkar and Sen use the term "Andamanese" in the sense defined above, while the equivalent term used by Cipriani is "Arioto."

No attempt will be made to summarize the main cultural patterns of the Andaman Islanders since two good cultural summaries are, or soon will be, available: Elman R. Service, A profile of primitive culture (1958): chap. 3 - which focuses on the Andamanese; and Moni Nag, "Andamanese," in F. LeBar, Ethnic groups of Insular Southeast Asia (forthcoming) - which covers all the Andaman Islanders.

The Andaman Islands, consisting of four main islands plus some 200 small islands, are located in the eastern part of the Bay of Bengal. Formerly under British administration, these islands, together with the Nicobar Islands, now form one of the states of India. The four main islands are generally divided into two groups called Great Andaman and Little Andaman. Great Andaman consists of three large islands (sometimes considered a single island intersected by narrow, irregular waterways) named North Andaman, Middle Andaman, and South Andaman. Little Andaman is one smaller island located some distance to the south of the main group.

The Andaman Islanders are considered to be a classic example of a "pure" hunting and gathering society, which has evidently been due to their long isolation from other cultural groups. They speak a variety of dialects and/or languages which are as yet unrelated by linguists to any other known language family or phylum. After the establishment of continuous British administration in 1858, government officials such as Man began to provide the first substantial information on these peoples.

They were found to be divided into 12 or 13 "tribes" or tribal units, most of whom differed mainly in dialect. On the basis of more pronounced linguistic and cultural differences, these tribes are usually clustered

into two major groups correlating roughly with the main geographical division noted above, namely, a Great Andaman Group and a Little Andaman Group. The latter group consists of only two or three tribes, while the former consists of 10 tribes, who in turn may be divided into two sub-groups varying somewhat in cultural and linguistic features. The tribes and their groupings are listed in the following table which is based primarily on 1: Radcliffe-Brown (p. 13), supplemented by data from 2: Man (map facing p. 224) and 3: Temple (p. 49). The tribal nomenclature follows Radcliffe-Brown, but variant tribal names used by Man and Temple are indicated in parentheses. The map in 2: Man, cited above, presents an excellent delineation of tribal distributions.

Table 1. The Andaman Islanders: Tribes and Tribal Groupings.

Major Groups	Sub-groups	Tribes
I. Great Andaman Group or "Andamanese"	A. Northern or Aka Yerewa Group	1. Aka-Cari (Aka-Chariar)
		2. Aka-Kora
		3. Aka-Bo (Aka-Tabo)
		4. Aka-Jeru (Aka-Yere)
		5. Aka-Kede
	B. Southern or Bojigngiji Group	6. Aka-Kol
		7. Oko-Juwoi (Aka-Jawai)
		8. A-Pucikwar (Aka-Bojigyab)
		9. Akar-Bale (Aka-Balawa)
		10. Aka-Bea
II. Little Andaman Group	(none)	1. Jarawa
		2. Onge
		3. North Sentinelese

This classification differs from Radcliffe-Brown's in one particular; he places the Aka-Kede within the Southern Group, whereas, in accordance with Man and Temple, they are placed here within the Northern Group. Furthermore, the cultural-geographical correlation breaks down with respect to the Jarawa. Culturally and linguistically they belong with the Onge, but they are located within the Great Andaman, particularly in the western interior of South Andaman. Finally, many authorities such as Man classify the North Sentinelese population as Jarawa rather than as a distinct tribe. But there does not seem to be sufficient data on which to base any definitive decision, so they are best listed separately for the time being.

Eleven sources, all in English, have been processed for this file. These sources fall roughly into two groups on the basis of field dates and tribes studied. The earliest group contains the two major monographs in the file, 1: Radcliffe-Brown and 2: Man, plus a third monograph, 3: Temple. These works focus primarily on the Andamanese tribes of Great Andaman.

2: Man is the first important study. It is by a government official who observed the Andamanese during the period 1869-1880 when their social and cultural life was still largely intact. Man's data pertain mainly to the Aka-Bea tribe of South Andaman, with a coverage of general ethnography, physical anthropology, and language. 3: Temple is also by a government official who was in the area at the turn of the century (1901). His data are primarily on demography and geography, but include some ethnography and linguistics, drawing heavily on Man's work for the latter. 1: Radcliffe-Brown is by a distinguished social anthropologist who presents a functional analysis of social organization, religio-magical beliefs and practices, and mythology. Unfortunately, by the time of Radcliffe-Brown's field work in 1906-1908, the Andamanese were at an advanced stage of population decline and sociocultural disintegration, so he was unable to get a clear, detailed picture of the traditional society in operation. Also, Radcliffe-Brown studied mainly the North Andaman tribes, plus the A-Pucikwar and Akar-Bale of the Southern Group, so most of his data cannot be directly coordinated with that of Man.

The remaining eight sources are all recent, ranging in field date from 1948 to 1955. By this time the Andamanese were nearly extinct, and these sources deal primarily with the Onge and Jarawa. These two tribes, plus the North Sentinelese, although undergoing some decline in population, have remained demographically and culturally viable. But much less is known about them than about the Andamanese. Probably the main reason for their continued viability as well as for our lack of knowledge, has been their long, implacable hostility to all outsiders. It is only in recent years that the Onge have become friendly, thus allowing some direct field studies. But the Jarawa and North Sentinelese remain hostile and relatively unknown.

Cipriani, a social anthropologist, may have been the principal authority on the Onge, but his posthumously published monograph, 11: Cipriani, is a very disappointing work containing little ethnographic data. It is a general book on the Andaman Islands, in which most of the primary data refers to the Onge. 6: Cipriani covers Onge hygienic and medical practices. Additional data on Onge population composition and the location of settlements are provided in 7: Sarkar, while serological data on the Onge, Jarawa, Andamanese, and Nicobarese may be found in 5: Sarkar.

Although Sarkar is a physical anthropologist, he presents in 9: Sarkar a synthesis of the scant data available on the Jarawa and North Sentinelese, drawing both from the literature and his own field work. His field data, however, are based almost entirely on the observation of abandoned settlement sites and random items of material culture which he managed to retrieve, since he was never able to actually contact any of the Jarawa people.

Sources concerning the islands in general include 4: Guha, an anthropological survey focusing on settlement patterns and the population composition of local groups, and 10: Sen, a survey of physical geography incorporating a cultural summary of each of the main tribal divisions, and a sketch of the culture history of the islands. Finally, 8: Heine-Geldern reviews the field work done among the Andaman Islanders, and lists the principal publications.

Thus far the data in this file are rather thin, and the coverage of the major aspects of culture is uneven. Best described are some of the Andamanese tribes who are now extinct. Processing of additional extant sources may help to fill out some of the needed information, but there is an urgent need for intensive ethnographic field work among the Onge, Jarawa, and North Sentinelese so that we may gain more adequate knowledge and understanding of this classic case of a truly "primitive" hunting and gathering cultural type.]

Processed in 1957 - 1965

Revised File Guide prepared in 1971
by Robert O. Lagacé